

Couple's display of anti-gay slurs angers, saddens Blue Sage neighbors

By **BILL VOGRIN**
THE GAZETTE

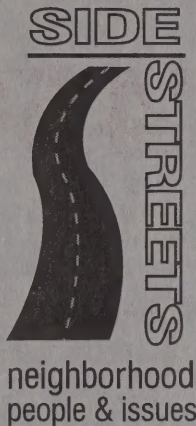
"NO FAGGOTS ALLOWED"

Three words carved in steel in letters about 4 inches tall jump out at anyone passing the tidy home of Randy and Ellie Mansfield.

A smaller white bumper sticker drives home the point even more: "God created Adam & Eve; Not Adam & Steve."

The large sign went up about three years ago after the Mansfields had a falling out with a neighbor who is gay. The signs remain up, months after the man moved away, and neighbors wish there was something authorities could do about them.

The signs are an embarrassment, say people living nearby on the gravel roads of the



Blue Sage subdivision in eastern El Paso County.

They use words such as "hateful" and "stupid" and "un-Christian" and "hurtful" to describe the signs and the couple who display them.

Some residents say it ought to be a crime to display such sentiments where impressionable children can see them.

Ellie Mansfield insists she and her husband, Randy, are misunderstood. They are not hateful people. In fact, she and her husband welcomed the gay man and his male companion when they moved to the neighborhood in 2000.

"I cooked for their housewarming dinner," Ellie Mansfield said. "We took them a gift — a

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MAIL • This resort town has decided against placing empty truck trailers along Interstate 70 to block traffic noise from reaching town.

Instead officials are seeking approval from the Federal Highway Administration to test other temporary noise barriers to see how effective they are and how residents like them.

The Town Council decided against using empty trailers last week.

The town has about \$260,000 in the budget this year to experiment with noise barriers.

It also is enforcing the 65 mph speed limit on I-70 through Vail in efforts to reduce noise.

So far the speed enforcement program appears to have led to a drop of about 3 mph in average speeds, and the overall noise level fell about one decibel, said Vail Public Works Supervisor Greg Hall.

A reduction of five decibels or more would be considered significant, but that could take years.

The Colorado Department of Transportation is considering using "quiet" asphalt on roads, but the stretch of I-70 through Vail isn't due for repaving for several years.

Councilman Farrow Hitt said some of his neighbors like the idea of noise walls to block sound, while some like a new kind of glass block sound wall that is favored in Europe.

Others don't want their views spoiled.

Anyone biking or walking the path by Monument Creek near where North Nevada Avenue joins Interstate 25 can't help but notice a big hole where the creek used to flow.

While large trucks, heavy equipment and workers have the creek torn up beyond recognition, it actually will help the creek in the long run by reducing erosion and protecting sewer lines.

Colorado Springs Utilities started the \$1 million project last month, Richard Dressel, project manager, said.

Workers are building a drop structure, which is basically a big wall.

The unusual feature of this wall is that although it's more than a dozen feet high, no one will be able to see it when it's finished.

"It's a whale of a lot of work," Dressel said, "but there should be a healthier Monu-

ment Creek in healthier, he said. The drop structure will limit the erosion of the creek.

In addition, the 10-inch sewer line runs across the creek.

When the structure was installed more than a year ago, they were made of concrete and submerged.

The water level has dropped 10 feet because of the conditions which led to the structure's failure, Dressel said.

"The pipeline is in contact in the case of a failure, it can be reinforced,"

Even though the structure is working in the Monument Creek, it's not perfect.

— workers have been working on the creek out of sight, building a temporary coffer dam.

They route the drop structure through steel tubes and a temporary road.

SIDE STREETS: Authorities can do nothing

FROM PAGE 1

park bench they wanted. They were constantly over at our house. We became friends."

The Mansfields even took them to dinners, movies, the fair and paid their way because the men seemed short of cash.

But the friendship ended abruptly — the Mansfields say one of the men began harassing Ellie and tried to turn the neighbors against them.

"This sign is made for only one person and he knows it," she said. "And he basically asked for it."

Randy Mansfield said the sign was a last resort to stop the harassment.

"I didn't want to attack an individual and face slander and get sued," Mansfield said, explaining why his sign address-

es all gays.

Whatever the excuse, neighbors believe the signs are wrong and say more about Mansfield than the person who allegedly harassed his wife.

"(Mansfield) doesn't have anything to do with anybody else," said Cynthia Drieth, who has lived in the neighborhood seven years. "He doesn't wave or anything. I just ignore the sign."

Neighbor Vic Wilde agrees. "Everyone's entitled to their opinion," Wilde said. "But you don't have to do it like that."

Even the Mansfields' best friend in the neighborhood, Bill Hurley, said the sign is wrong.

"I think everyone would like to see it come down," Hurley said. "But that's his right, I guess."

The sign is especially hurtful to Laura Gearhart, whose

brother was gay and died of AIDS-related causes 13 years ago.

"I took care of him until he died," Gearhart said. "It's not my lifestyle. But it was his."

The slur reminds her of the pain her brother endured. Even worse, she fears such a public display will make children think it's OK to use such language and to judge or attack gays.

"My grandsons saw it," she said. "I'm trying to keep those kinds of words out of their vocabularies. Like racial slurs. I don't want them to grow up and be bigots."

Her biggest fear is that it could lead to a physical attack.

"I just think it incites hate crimes," she said. "Someone ought to make him take it down."

But authorities say there is

nothing they can do.

The state ethnic intimidation law applies to issues of race, religion and national origin but does not address sexual orientation as a protected class, said prosecutor Dave Young of the 4th Judicial District Attorney's Office.

If Mansfield screamed the words on his sign at someone, or tried to incite a fight, he

could be in violation of harassment laws, said Lt. Clif Northam of the El Paso County Sheriff's Office.

But simply putting them on a sign does not constitute intimidation or harassment, he said.

Mansfield said no one had to call authorities to get him to remove the signs.

"I'd gladly remove it,"

Randy Mansfield said. "All the neighbors had to do was ask me. If they'd show a little intestinal fortitude and stop and ask me, I'd take it down. I'm very reasonable."

Mansfield promised the signs will be removed by the weekend.

Tell us about your neighborhood: 636-0193 or bvogrin@gazette.com



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BIRTHS

● Penrose Community Hospital

GEISENHEIMER-SKINNER:

Johnathan Skinner and Roxanne Geisenheimer, Colorado Springs, a girl, June 26.

SEARLE: Jakeb and Camilla, Colorado Springs, a girl, June 26.

SHYROCK: Brady and Tara, Colorado Springs, a boy, June 26.

BOTT: Joshua and Kathryn, Colorado

Spring, a girl, June 26.

BARTLETT: Scott and Carrie, Colorado Springs, a boy, June 27.

RUIZ-STELL-GIVEN: Charles Given and Radine Ruiz-Stell, Colorado Springs, a boy, June 27.

PERKINS: David and Renata, Colorado Springs, a boy, June 27.

GOURLEY: Eric and Jessica, Colorado Springs, a boy, June 28.

MENDEZ: Armando and Myra, Colorado Springs, a boy, June 28.

LANE: Randall and Lorraine, Colorado Springs, a girl, June 28.

BREITENSTEIN: John and Janel, a boy, June 28.

ALLISON: Nicholas and Shauna, Florissant, a boy, June 28.

DIAZ: Alberto and Basilisa, a boy, June 28.

GANN: Jeremy and Josephine, Fort Carson, a boy, June 28.

DAINGERFIELD: Michael and Brandy, Calhan, a girl, June 28.

THOMAS: Leonard and Catherine, Colorado Springs, a girl, June 28.

HILL-FORSTER: George Forster and Renee Hill, Colorado Springs, a girl, June 28.

LUCAS: Justin and Krista, Colorado

Spring, a girl, June 29.

CODDINGTON: Eric and Dacia, Colorado Springs, a boy, June 29.

VAJDA: Zoltan and Tracy, Larkspur, a girl, June 29.

ZYLSTRA: Jason and Natalie, a girl, June 29.

BUCHANAN: Sean and Kathy, a girl, June 29.

AGUILAR: Brian and Angela, a girl,

June 29.

HUTCHINSON-WEALE: Jeffrey Weale and Jenny Hutchinson, a girl, June 29.

GONZALEZ-TREJO: Gabriel Trejo and Marilyn Gonzalez, Colorado Springs, a boy, June 30.

CLEM-HODER: George Hoder and Melissa Clem, Colorado Springs, a girl, June 30.

DEATHS

PATRICIA L. BENNETT

Born Dec. 24, 1946. Died July 11, 2004.

Hotel supervisor, 32-year Colorado Springs resident. Survived by two sons, Rodney Cayce and Ronald Bennett. Visitation, 3 to 7 p.m. today, Evergreen Funeral Home.

ELLEEN LOIS CAULFIELD

Born Feb. 18, 1914. Died July 12, 2004.

Retired, five-year Colorado Springs resident. Survived by two sons, Nick Ice and Ronald Raney; and a daughter, Gloria G. Gibson. Graveside services, 2 p.m. Monday, Memorial Gardens Cemetery. Swan Law Funeral Directors.

PAULA CHRISTNER

Born Jan. 10, 1929. Died July 11, 2004.

Apartment manager, 48-year Colorado Springs resident. Survived by three sons, Robert L. Zook, Steven C. Zook and Ronald Bohenstengel. Spartan Services.

WILLIAM N. DAVIDSON

Born March 27, 1916. Died July 9, 2004.

Colorado Springs resident. Survived by his

LOTTIE MAUL

Born March 25, 1913. Died July 11, 2004.

Homemaker, longtime Calhan resident. Survived by a son, Darroll. Graveside services, 1 p.m. Friday, Memorial Gardens Cemetery. Swan Law Funeral Directors.

MARQUES DE'MONTE POOLE

Born May 26, 2004. Died July 10, 2004.

Infant, Colorado Springs resident. Survived by his parents, Donald Poole and Natasha Bell. Visitation, 11:30 to 1 p.m., with services to follow, Saturday, Cappadona's Family Service Center.

CHRISTOPHER FRANKLIN MONROE SKAGGS

Born Oct. 28, 1988. Died July 13, 2004.

Student, four-year Colorado Springs resident. Survived by his parents, Ernest R. and Tanya L. Services, 2 p.m. Saturday, Swan Law Cascade Chapel.

RETIRED TECH. SGT. OTTO SMALO

Born Jan. 1, 1932. Died July 13, 2004.

Air Force, 30-year Colorado Springs resident. Survived by his wife, Hilda.

SERVICES

Barbara Elizabeth Ayers

Celebration of Life, 1 p.m. Sunday, Memorial Gardens Chapel.

Carmela Burton

Services, 10 a.m. Friday, Memorial Gardens Chapel. Inurnment, The Garden of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Memorial Gardens Cemetery.

Frances Falco

Services, 2 p.m. Friday, Chapel of Our Savior, 8 Fourth St. Cappadona's Alternative Funeral Service.

Dr. Gary Gray

Services, 11 a.m. July 24, Little Chapel of the Hills, 69 County Road 5, Divide. Dove-Witt Family Mortuary, Fountain.

Raymond Lee Marshall

Services, 10 a.m. Saturday, St. Paul's United Methodist Church, 2111 Carlton Ave. Swan Law Funeral Directors.

Shannon Diane McMahon

Services, 9 a.m. today, Our Lady of the Pines Catholic Church, 11020 Teachout Road, Black Forest.

Dorcas L. Pettis

Visitation, 1 to 2 p.m., with services to follow, Friday, Shrine of Remembrance, "America the Beautiful," Chapel of Roses. Burial, Memorial Gardens Cemetery.

Emmet J. Skinner

Visitation, 6 to 8 p.m. today, Evergreen Funeral Home. Services, 10 a.m. Friday, Evergreen Funeral Home. Burial, Evergreen